

# MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 26 July 2023

## Climate change health strategy welcome but needs work

The development of a Commonwealth Government strategy on health and climate change is welcome but the proposed scope set out in a Department of Health and Aged Care Consultation Paper doesn't sufficiently address the health impacts of climate change, the Australian Medical Association said today.

In a [submission](#) to the Department of Health and Aged Care's [consultation on the National Health and Climate Change Strategy](#), the AMA said the focus of the strategy needs to be broader.

AMA President Professor Steve Robson said a strategy was an important first step in acknowledging and aiming to address the health impacts of climate change.

"However, climate change is a health emergency and while making the healthcare system more sustainable is important, the strategy must also prioritise preventing and responding to the health impacts of climate change, which requires a whole-of-government approach," Professor Robson said.

"We've had some devastating climate events in the past few years which has demonstrated the very real health impacts of climate change.

"Doctors by our nature are concerned with ensuring the health of our patients. It's vital we advocate for policies which will address the health impacts of climate change.

"We're not talking about 'what if?' questions. Our patients and communities are already affected by climate change and extreme weather events. We need action to mitigate the worst effects down the track, and we need to ensure the health care sector is resourced to help keep Australians healthy."

The AMA is playing its part in a joint effort with Doctors for the Environment Australia committing to a health care system achieving net zero emissions by 2040, with an interim goal of an 80 per cent reduction by 2030.

"While the medical workforce is increasingly passionate about making change in this space, most currently do not have the capacity or capability to do so," Professor Robson said.

The strategy must include a plan to increase the capacity and capability of the health system to make meaningful progress.

"Funding and resourcing health and climate change action should be seen as an investment, not a cost. Implementing the strategy will require significant initial funding but will result in substantial savings and health benefits over time."

[Read the AMA's submission](#)

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Contact: AMA Media: +61 427 209 753 [media@ama.com.au](mailto:media@ama.com.au)

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